NAXOS
A Guided Tour of
The Romantic Era
Volume 1

BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN (1770-1827)

1 Fidelio, Op. 72, Overture
2 Fidelio, Op. 72, Act I, No. 3: Quartet – Mir ist so wunderbar
3 Fidelio, Op. 72, Act I No. 7: Aria and Chorus – Ha! welch ein Augenblick!
4 Fidelio, Op. 72, Act II No. 15: Duet – O namenlose Freude!
5 Missa Solemnis, Op. 123, Kyrie Eleison
6 Missa Solemnis, Op. 123, Sanctus
7 Missa Solemnis, Op. 123, Sanctus: Benedictus
8 Fantasia in C minor, Op. 80, 'Choral Fantasy'
9 Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55, 'Eroica', II. Marcia funebre: Adagio assai
10 Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67, I. Allegro con brio
11 Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, 'Pastoral', I. Pleasant, cheerful feelings aroused on approaching the countryside: Allegro ma non troppo
12 Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, 'Choral', IV. Finale: Presto
13 Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37, III. Rondo: Allegro
14 Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58, I. Allegro moderato
15 Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73, 'Emperor', II. Adagio un poco mosso
16 Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73, 'Emperor', III. Rondo: Allegro
17 Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61, III. Rondo: Allegro
18 String Quartet No. 6 in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6, IV. La malinconica: Adagio – allegretto quasi allegro
19 String Quartet No. 7 in F major, Op. 59, No. 1, 'Rasumovsky', I. Allegro
20 String Quartet No. 8 in E minor, Op. 59, No. 2, 'Rasumovsky', II. Molto adagio
21 String Quartet No. 10 in E flat major, Op. 74, 'Harp', I. Poco adagio – allegro
22 String Quartet No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 131, I. Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
23 String Quartet No. 16 in F major, Op. 135, I. Allegretto
24 Piano Trio in E flat major, Op. 1, No. 1, I. Allegro
25 Piano Trio in D Major, Op. 70, No. 1, 'Ghost', II. Largo assai ed espressivo
26 Piano Trio in B flat major, Op. 97, 'Archduke', II. Scherzo: Allegro
27 Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, 'Pathetique', I. Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio
28 Piano Sonata No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, 'Moonlight', I. Adagio sostenuto
29 Piano Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, 'Waldstein', III. Rondo: Allegretto moderato – Prestissimo
30 Piano Sonata No. 29 in B flat major, Op. 106, 'Hammerklavier', III. Adagio sostenuto. Appassionato e con molto sentimento
31 Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109, I. Vivace, ma non troppo – Adagio espressivo – Prestissimo
32 Piano Sonata No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110, I. Moderato cantabile, molto espressivo
33 Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111, II. Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile
34 The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43, Overture

FIELD, JOHN (1782-1837)

35 Nocturne No. 1 in E flat major
36 Nocturne No. 12 in G major
37 Nocturne No. 18 in E major, 'Midi'
38 Piano Sonata in E flat major, Op. 1, No. 1, I. Allegro moderato
39 Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3, I. Non troppo allegro, ma con fuoco e con espressione
40 Piano Concerto No. 3 in E flat major, H.32, II. Rondo: Tempo di polacca
41 Piano Concerto No. 4 in E flat major, H.28, III. Rondo: Allegretto

BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN (1770-1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven was born in Bonn in December, 1770. In 1792 he went to Vienna, and was quick to establish himself as a pianist and composer. As a young composer in Bonn, Beethoven had followed the trends of his time, but in Vienna he was increasingly to develop his own unmistakable and original musical idiom. It was an apparent stroke of fate that played an essential part in this process: by the turn of the century Beethoven had begun to experience bouts of deafness. It was this inability to hear that inevitably directed his attention to composition rather than performance, as the latter activity became increasingly difficult. In Vienna Beethoven lived through turbulent times. The armies of Napoleon occupied the imperial capital, and war brought various changes of fortune to the composer's friends and supporters. The last twelve years of Beethoven's life were spent in the relative political tranquility that followed Napoleon's final defeat. Beethoven died in March 1827, his death the occasion for public mourning in Vienna at the passing of a figure whose like the city was not to see again. His influence on nineteenth-century musicians is hard to overestimate.

OPERA (Tracks 1-4)
Although he contemplated others, Beethoven wrote only one opera. This was eventually called *Fidelio* after the name assumed by the heroine Leonora, who disguises herself as a boy and takes employment at the prison in which her husband has been unjustly incarcerated. The work was first staged in 1805 and mounted again in a revised performance in 1814, under more favourable circumstances. Today it is recognised as a work of extraordinary musical and dramatic power.

CHORAL MUSIC (Tracks 5-8)
Beethoven's most impressive choral work is the *Missa solemnis*, written for the enthronement of his pupil Archduke Rudolph as Archbishop of Olmütz. Beethoven worked on the Mass for some five years, achieving a new musical, dramatic and liturgical synthesis, creating something that is both old and completely new, an apotheosis comparable to that he brought about with his last symphony. An earlier work, the oratorio *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, is less well known.

SYMPHONIES (Tracks 9-12)
Beethoven completed nine symphonies, works that influenced the whole future of music by their expansion of the traditional Classical form. The best known are No. 5, No. 6 ('Pastoral'), and No. 9 ('Choral'). Beethoven broke away from the traditional limitations of the symphony, reflecting the personal and political struggles of a period of immense change and turbulence. This process culminated in March 1824 with his magnificent ninth symphony, a work that summarises much of his achievement.

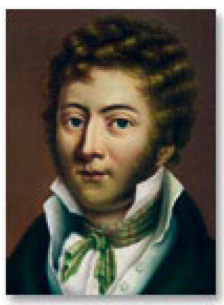
CONCERTOS (Tracks 13-17)
Beethoven completed one violin concerto and five piano concertos, as well as a Triple Concerto for violin, cello and piano, and a curious Choral Fantasia for solo piano, chorus and orchestra. The piano concertos were for the composer's own use in concert performance, and showcase a range of technical and musical beauties; No. 5, the so-called 'Emperor' Concerto, is possibly the most impressive. The single Violin Concerto, also arranged for piano, is today part of the standard violin repertoire.

QUARTETS (Tracks 18-23)
With his 16 string quartets, Beethoven extended very considerably the possibilities of the genre. This is shown even in his first, Op. 18, set of quartets, but it is possibly the group of three dedicated to Prince Rasumovsky, Op. 59, that are best known. The quartets are much longer and more demanding than any audience at the time might have expected, however familiar the idiom may now sound. The later string quartets offer great challenges to both players and audience, and include the remarkable *Grosse Fuge*.

TRIOS (Tracks 24-26)
Beethoven composed a number of string trios as well as several piano trios for violin, cello and piano. The 'Archduke' Trio is perhaps his crowning achievement in the genre, with the 'Ghost' Trio a close runner-up, for very different reasons: dating from 1811, the expansive and dramatic 'Archduke' is dedicated to Archduke Rudolph, Beethoven's pupil, while the 'Ghost', from 1808, derives its name from its profoundly eerie and mysterious middle movement.

SONATAS (Tracks 27-33)
Beethoven's 32 numbered piano sonatas make full use of the developing form of the piano, with its wider range and possibilities of dynamic contrast. They provide a remarkable conspectus of his own style, ranging from the earliest, under the influence of Haydn, to the last, which explore a new world in their bold complexity. Beethoven also wrote ten sonatas for violin and piano, of which the 'Spring' and the 'Kreutzer' are particular favourites with audiences, and several cello sonatas.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Track 34)



FIELD, JOHN (1782-1837)

John Field was born in Dublin in 1782, the son of a theatre violinist. He was taught the piano first by his father and then from the age of nine by the Neapolitan composer and impresario Tommaso Giordani (c. 1730–1806). In 1793 the Fields moved to Bath, but by the autumn of the same year they had moved again, this time to London. In London John Field appeared in 1794, at the age of twelve, as a pupil of Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). Field's apprenticeship brought the advantages of a sound musical training, continued appearances in London concerts and the start of a necessarily concomitant career as a composer. 1801 saw the end of Field's seven-year apprenticeship and the following year Clementi set out for Paris, taking Field with him. From there they travelled on to Vienna and Russia. After concerts in Russia, he remained in St. Petersburg, where he became a fashionable teacher and performer, moving to Moscow in 1821. By 1831 ill health forced Field to seek medical help in London, where he recovered enough to be able to appear at concerts in London and in Manchester. Returning to Russia, he died on 23 January 1837.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 35-39)
Although Field wrote seven piano concertos and a series of chamber compositions for piano and strings, his chief claim on posterity lies in his eighteen Nocturnes. He has been credited with the invention of the genre, though the form was later adopted and developed by Chopin.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Tracks 40-41)

Text by Keith Anderson, David McCleery, David Patmore and Caroline Waight